



Judicial Districts in North Carolina

North Carolina Courts Commission

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UNC School of Government

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Judicial Districts--NC Constitution, Art. IV

- "The General Assembly shall, from time to time, divide the state into a convenient number of superior court judicial districts.
- "The General Assembly shall, from time to time, divide the state into a convenient number of local court districts and shall prescribe where the district courts shall sit.
- The General Assembly shall, from time to time, divide the state into a convenient number of prosecutorial districts

History—Before Court Reform

- One superior court judge per district, 1868
- 1868—12 districts
- 1875—9 districts
- 1901—16 districts
- 1913—20 districts
- 1937—21 districts
- 1950—Constitutional amendment to allow more than one judge per district
- 1955—30 (2 judges in Mecklenburg and Guilford)



Judicial Districts, 1955-2015

- 1955--Thirty for superior court; in 1967, for all purposes
 - Six one-county districts, two seven-county districts
- 2015
 - Superior Court--70 for elections, 50 for administration
 - District Court—44 for elections, 41 for administration
 - District Attorneys—44 for all purposes
 - 24 one-county S.Ct. districts; two seven-county Dist. Ct. and DA districts



Judicial Districts, 1960-2010

- 1960
 - Largest--272,000 (Mecklenburg)
 - Smallest--73,000 (1st, 6th, and 24th)
 - Ratio--4/1
 - Average size--151,871
- 2010
 - Largest-969,000 (26th); 952,000 (10th)
 - Smallest—62,500 (9A); 60,500 (20A)
 - Ratio--16/1
 - Average size—222,000 (DA/District Court); 195,000 (Superior Court)



Districting Milestones

- 1950—allowing more than one judge per district
- 1955—thirty district plan adopted
- 1965—district court added to superior court districts
- 1969—prosecutorial districts added to superior court districts
- 1975—first district split (Gaston, Lincoln, Cleveland)—DA only
- 1977—district splits in Orange, Chatham and Alamance and applicable to all three levels

Milestones 1980-90's

- 1981, 1987, 1991—district split for Craven, Carteret, Pitt and Pamlico done in three separate stages
- 1987—redistricting for voting rights compliance; introduction of electoral districts and “sets of districts”
- 1987—one county moved from one district to another (Hoke from 12 to 16)
- 1989—dividing of district previously divided (19A—Cabarrus and Rowan into 19A—Cabarrus and 19C—Rowan)
- 1993—new district from parts of two existing districts (9A—Caswell and Person, from remaining districts 17A and 9)
- 1995—district court district divided into electoral districts only (9 and 9B---Franklin, Granville, Vance and Franklin)

Milestones—2000 to present

- 2001—existing sets of districts redrawn in Wake and Guilford
- 2001—residency requirement for district court candidates established (Johnston, Harnett and Lee)
- 2006—residency district for Union repealed, and in 2007, reinstated for a new district in that county
- 2011—superior court districts redrawn to comply with Blankenship v. Bartlett, *one person, one vote* NC Supreme Court decision
- 2013—reversal of district split for district court and DA only, Halifax, Bertie, Northhampton,, and Hertford)



Judicial Districts

- 32 districts have coterminous lines for all three functions (excluding sets of districts)
- Seven district court and district attorney districts comprise two superior court districts (Districts 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 25, 30)
- One superior court and district court district – 16A—served by two prosecutors 16A and 16C
- Five districts have the same boundaries for the same purposes as in 1965 (1, 2, 23, 24, 28,)

County with most movement--Moore

- 1970—District 20 for all purposes
- 1987—District 20A for superior court, others in District 20
- 1995—Moved to District 19B for all purposes
- 1999—Sub-districts (19B1 and 19B2) established for superior court elections, each composed of part of Moore, Montgomery and Randolph
- 2003—Moved to new district 19D for superior court
- 2006—Moved to new district 19D for DA

Judicial Districts

- Districts have been split
- Divided and rearranged with parts of other districts to form new districts (9A, 16A)
- Portions of one district have been moved to other districts (Moore from 20 to 19B)
- Divided into subdistricts for electoral purposes only, within a county
- Divided into subdistricts for electoral purposes only, using parts of two or more counties



District Realignments

- To set up a new district (by subdividing a district into two new districts), the state must, at a minimum, have
 - a chief district court judge (by adding a new position or upgrading an existing judgeship)
 - support staff, GAL district administrator, chief court counselor, district Probation officer, etc
 - a senior resident superior court judge (ditto)
 - a district attorney (usually a completely new position) and required staff (administrative assistant)
- To consolidate districts, must do the reverse and eliminate one of each position



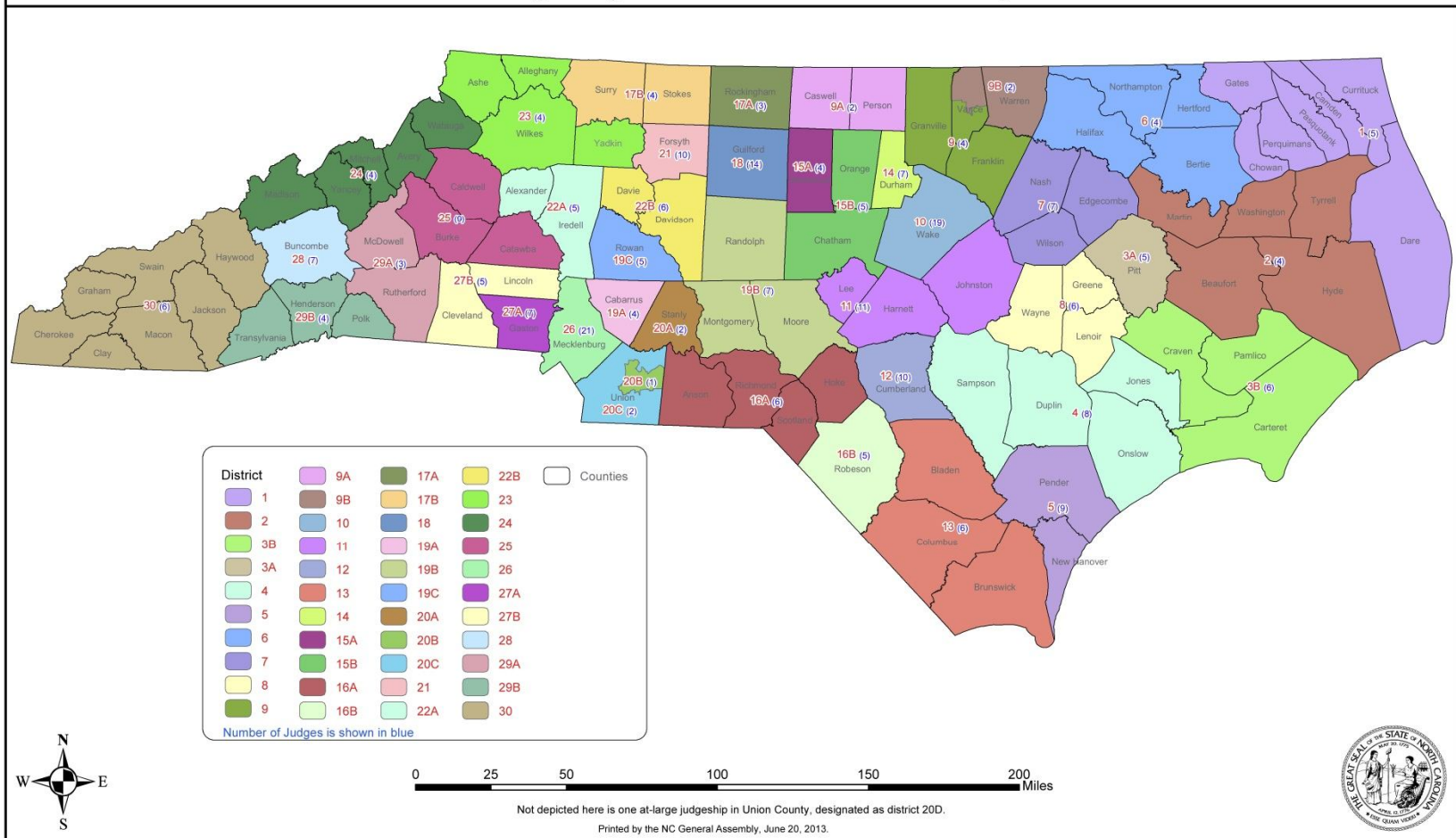
Factors

- Ways to add judicial resources
- Population
- Caseload
- Geography
- Desire for local influence
- Facilities
- Establish minority/majority districts



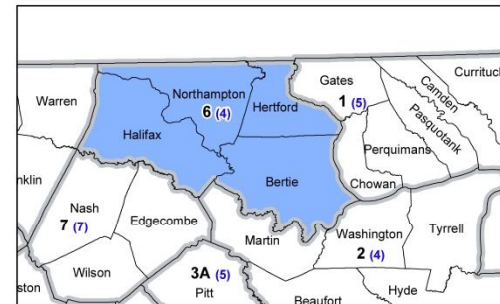
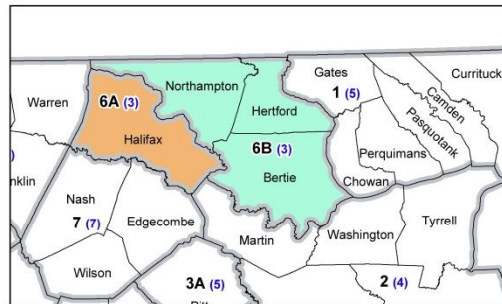
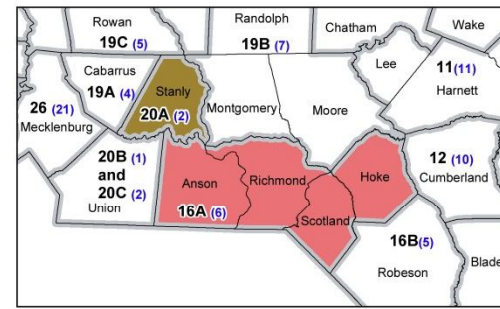
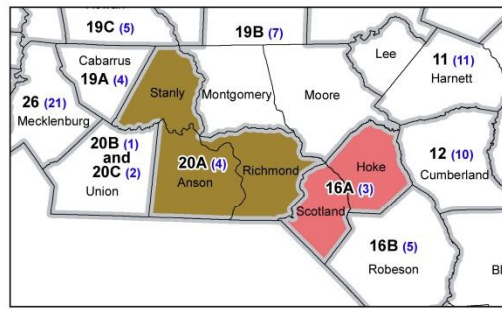
District Court Districts Effective January 1, 2015

District Court Districts - *G.S. 7A-133* Reflecting changes written into the 2013 House budget



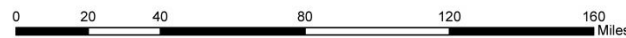
2013 Budget Changes to District Court Districts

Changes to District Court Districts Resulting from the 2013 Budget (eff. 1/1/2015)



Prior to 2013 Budget Changes (eff. 1/1/2015)

After 2013 Budget Changes (eff. 1/1/2015)



Not depicted here is one at-large judgeship in Union County, designated as district 20D.

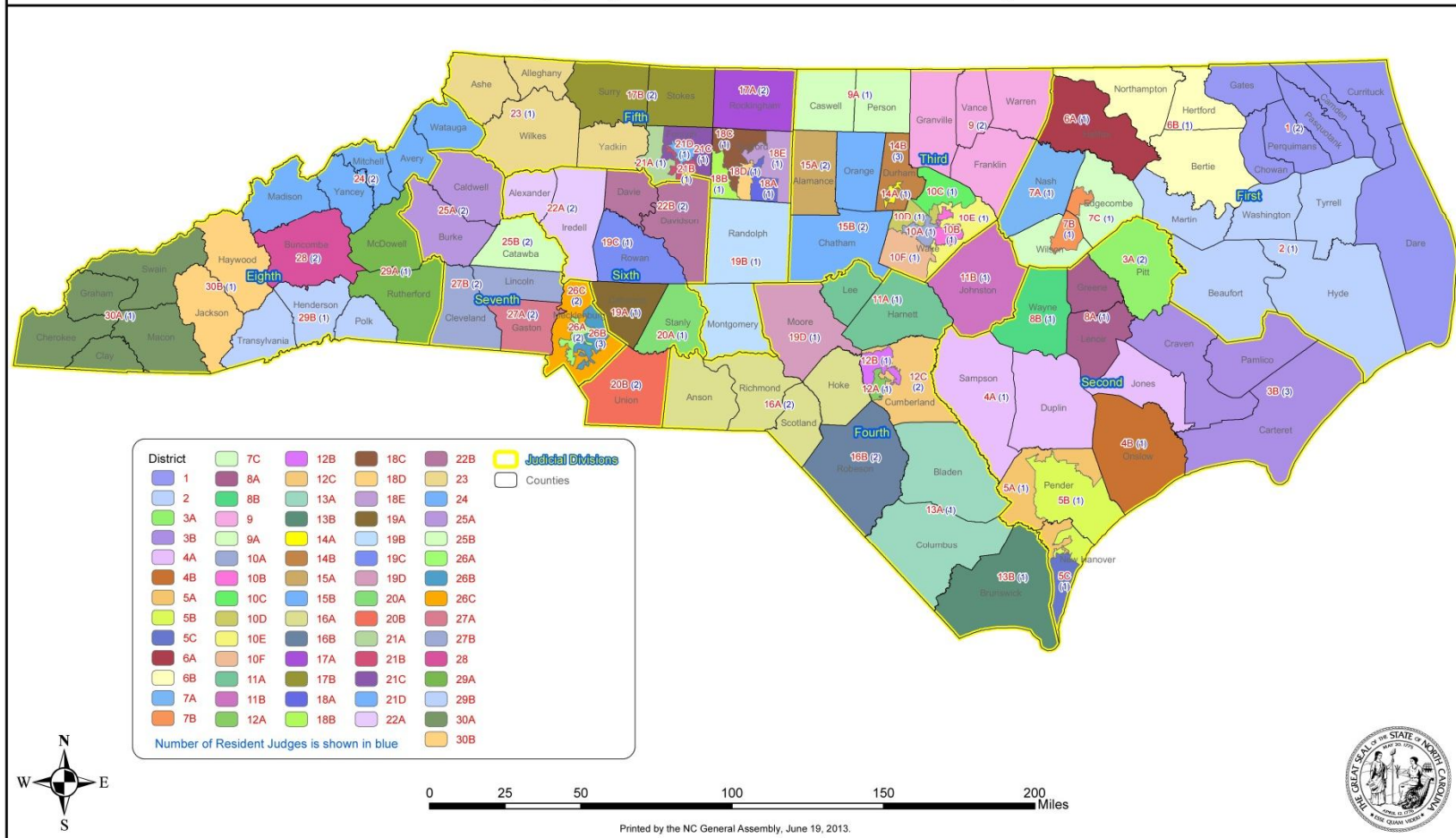
Map based on G. S. 7A-133.

Printed by the NC General Assembly, September 22, 2014.



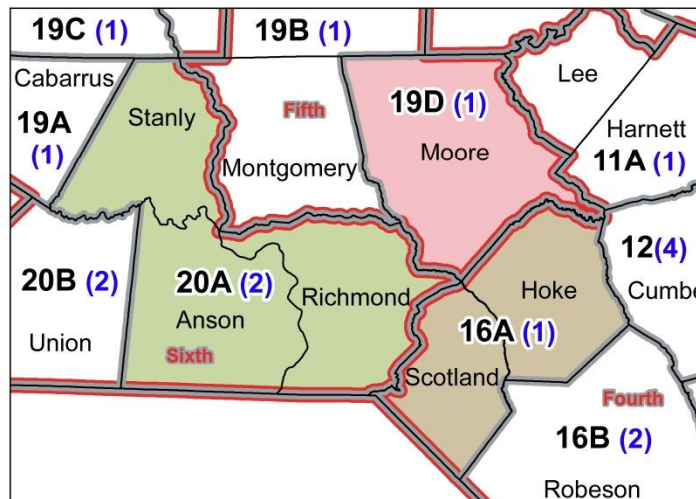
Superior Court Districts Effective 1-1-2-14

Superior Court Districts and Judicial Divisions - *G.S. 7A-41*
Reflecting changes written into the 2013 House budget

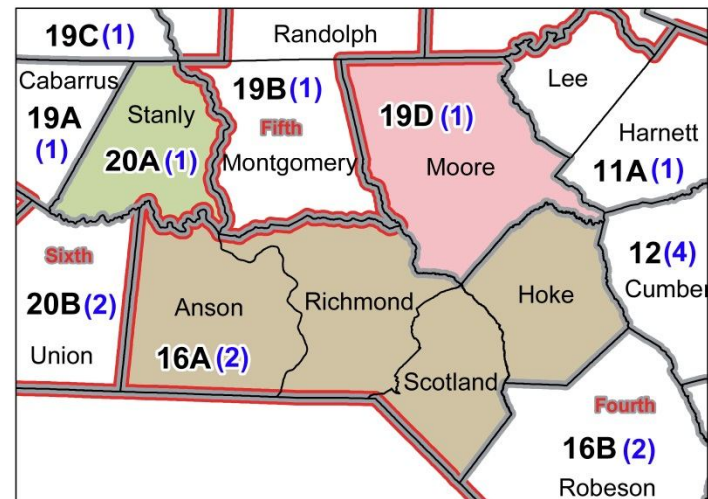


2013 Budget Changes to Superior Court Districts and Divisions

Changes to Superior Court Districts and Judicial Divisions Resulting from the 2013 Budget (eff. 1/1/2015)



Prior to 2013 Budget Changes (eff. 1/1/2015)



After 2013 Budget Changes (eff. 1/1/2015)

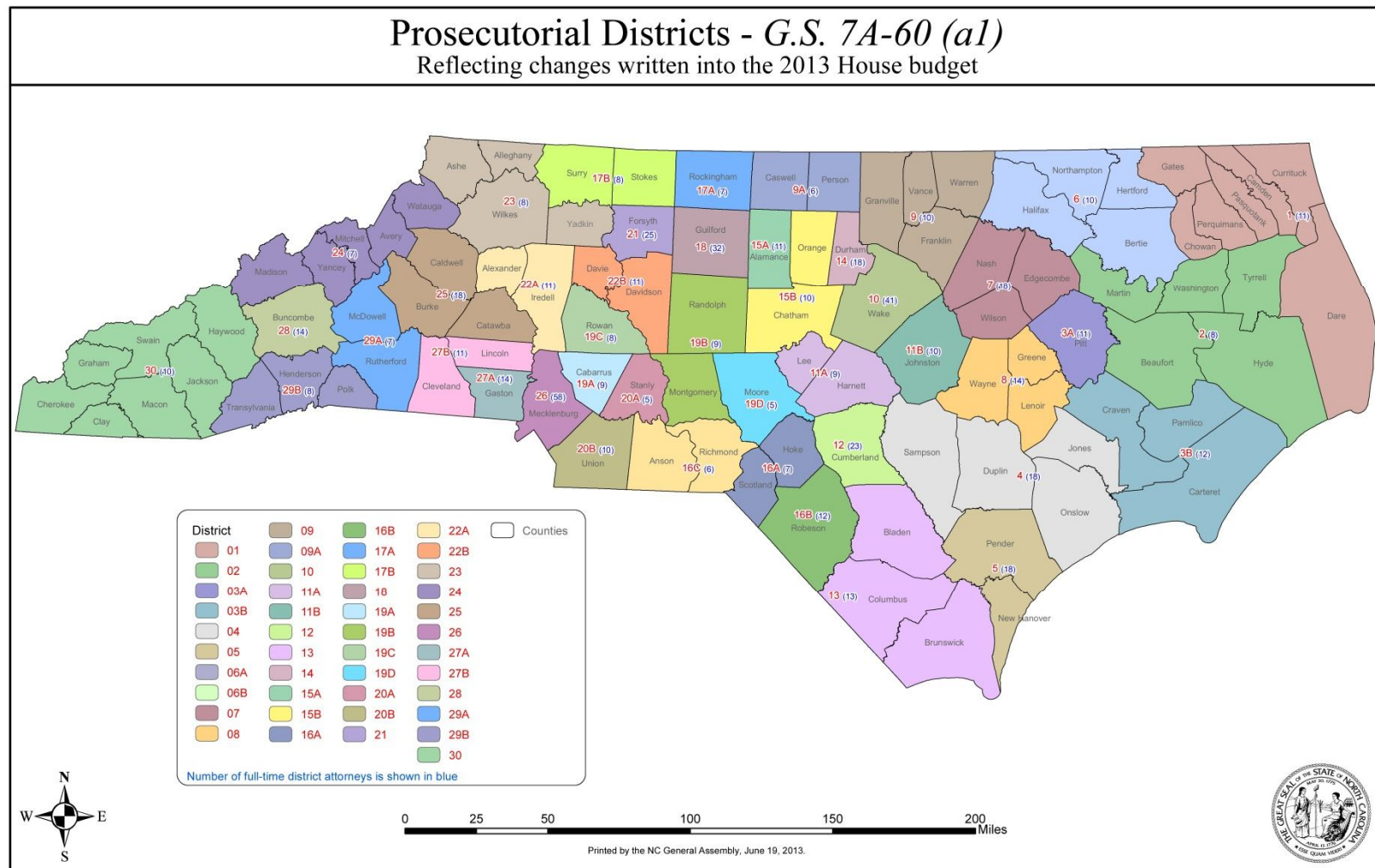


Map based on G.S. 7A-41

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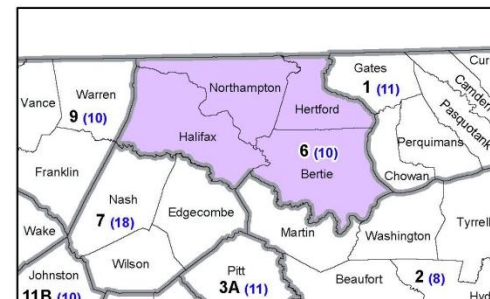
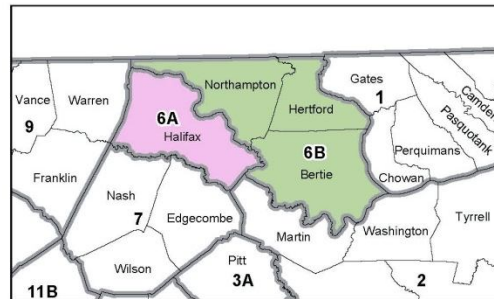
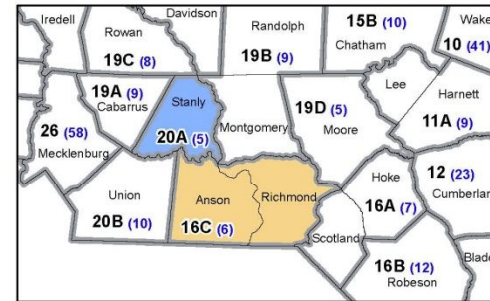
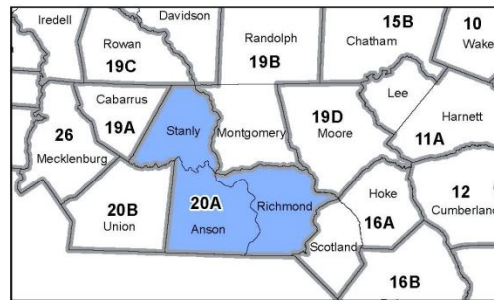


Prosecutorial Districts Effective 1-1-2015



2013 Budget Changes to Prosecutorial Districts

Changes to Prosecutorial Districts from the 2013 Budget (eff. 1/1/2015).



Prior to 2013 Budget Changes (eff. 1/1/2015)

After 2013 Budget Changes (eff. 1/1/2015)

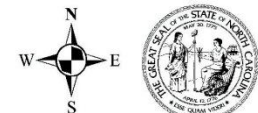
Legend

- County
- 1** Prosecutorial District
(Number of full-time District Attorneys)

0 15 30 60 90 120 Miles

Map based on G.S. 7A-60 (a1)

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